

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Element is an important planning tool for the City of Chula Vista. It identifies the housing needs of the City and recommends ways to meet these needs while balancing other community objectives and resources.

City Profile

Chula Vista is the second largest municipality in San Diego County with a population of 166,945 residents. The City covers approximately 50 square miles along the San Diego Bay and surrounded by National City, the City of San Diego, and the unincorporated area. Two major north-south freeways, I-5 and I-805 traverse Chula Vista. The area west of the I-805, “western Chula Vista” is built-up and characterized by well-established neighborhoods with primarily infill and redevelopment residential construction activity. The developing “eastern area” is comprised of large vacant tracts constituent to several master planned communities in various stages of approval and implementation.

Housing Element

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As the needs and programs are discussed in this Housing Element, a distinction may be made between Western and Eastern Chula Vista. Figure 1 shows the areas covered by that reference.

State Policy and Authorization

The California State Legislature has identified the attainment of a decent home and suitable living environment for every Californian as the State’s main housing goal. Recognizing the important part that local planning programs play in pursuit of this goal, the Legislature has mandated that all cities and counties prepare a housing element as part of their comprehensive general plans.

State law requires housing elements to be updated at least every five years to reflect a community’s changing housing needs. Chula Vista’s Housing Element was last updated in 1991. No update of the Element was required until 1999 due to legislative extensions. This document is the 1999-2004 update required for jurisdictions within the San Diego region.

Organization of the Housing Element

Section 65302(c) of the Government Code sets forth the specific components to be contained in a community’s housing element. Table 1 summarizes these State requirements and identifies the sections in the Chula Vista Housing Element where these requirements are addressed.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

California law requires that General Plans contain an integrated and internally consistent set of goals and policies. The City of Chula Vista's General Plan consists of ten elements: 1) Land Use; 2) Circulation; 3) Open Space and Conservation; 4) Noise; 5) Safety; 6) Public Facilities; 7) Housing; 8) Growth Management; 9) Parks and Recreation; and 10) Childcare, and contains goals and policies for urban development, community design, housing, natural hazards, economic development, and public services and facilities. The Housing Element is most affected by development policies of the Land Use Element, which establishes the location, type, intensity, and distribution of land uses throughout the City.

The Housing Element uses the residential goals and objectives of the City's adopted Land Use Element as a policy framework for developing more specific goals and policies in the Housing Element. The main themes expressed in the goals and objectives of the Land Use Element for residential development include the following:

1. Choice - The City should ensure a diversity of housing types and price levels.
2. Planned, Quality Development – The city should ensure that new developments are of high quality design and planning, with coordinated mix of urban uses, open spaces, and amenities.
3. Medium and High Density Compatibility with Surroundings and Services – The City should provide multi-family housing in appropriate areas convenient to public services, facilities, and circulation, and limit higher densities where found to be incompatible with the conservation of single family neighborhoods.
4. Preservation – The City should preserve and reinforce existing neighborhoods.

The Housing Element is also affected by the policies set forth in the Noise Element and Safety Element. These Elements contain policies which may limit residential development in certain areas for reasons of noise impacts, geology, and public safety. The Circulation Element also relates to the Housing Element in that major areas for housing must be served with adequate access routes and transportation systems.

The Growth Management Element can also have an affect on the development of housing, although it does not impose any numerical cap or limit on new housing construction. The primary purpose and intent of this Element is to maintain the community's quality-of-life as new housing and other development occur by providing necessary public services and facilities concurrent with development. The City's growth management program is intended to be supportive of the provision of affordable housing by guaranteeing that infrastructure and public services are provided to new residential developments when and where needed, and are paid for by new development. Should that infrastructure not be provided, the City has the right to slow or stop development, which could have a temporary effect on the timing of providing additional affordable housing units.

The content of this Housing Element is consistent with the goals and policies of all elements of the City's General Plan. As the City moves forward with an update of its General Plan in FY 2001-02 and 2002-03, the City will incorporate the general goals and policies established in the Housing Element into the framework of those affected Elements of the General Plan.

Public Participation

The general public was solicited for comments on the updated Housing Element in a variety of ways. The City's efforts to involve the public in the development and review of the Element included meetings through the Housing Element Advisory Committee (HEAC) of SANDAG, local public workshops, and public hearings before the Housing Advisory Commission, Planning Commission and City Council.

The HEAC meetings held at SANDAG offices were primarily focused on establishing Housing Element self-certification criteria and which housing programs and products would be used towards meeting self-certification goals. The Committee was comprised of representatives from local jurisdictions, local advocacy groups, and housing providers. The diversity of the Committee assisted in developing a self-certification program that addressed the needs of the various public interest groups and providers. Therefore, the self-certification program and criteria adopted by SANDAG is a direct product of a far reaching public participation process.

Early in the Housing Element update process, July 1999, one Housing Element information session was held with the City Council. At that time, they discussed the draft Regional Housing Needs and provided comments on the proposed preliminary goals and policy revisions for the 1999-2004 Housing Element update. Also, as part of housing program funding discussions, the Housing Advisory Commission discussed and gave input on housing programs and needs.

The draft Housing Element was subject to four public-noticed workshops to obtain the view of citizens, developers, service providers, and other interested persons on the City's housing needs, policies, and programs to be implemented to address these needs. The public workshops were held on October 20th, October 27th, November 1st, and November 3, 1999 and were noticed both in the local newspaper and through direct mailings to potentially interested parties. The Planning Commission and Housing Advisory Commission hosted one workshop each, and there were two additional workshops scheduled for public convenience. The mailing list included housing advocates, special needs providers, local builders, local school districts, mobilehome communities, and affordable housing developments. Many of these groups received a copy of the draft Housing Element.

After completing the series of public workshops, the draft Housing Element was made available for review and comment for a 30 day period. The document was available at various locations, including the Main Chula Vista Library, South Chula Vista Library, Eastlake High School Library, City Clerk's Office, the Planning and Building Department, and the Community Development Department. A copy of the notice was published in the local newspaper and through direct mailings to potentially interested parties.

Additionally, as a result of comments received from residential developers during the public review and comment period, City staff held a series of meetings from December 1999 to July 2000 with residential developers of the City's master planned communities and affordable housing developers. Discussions centered on constraints to residential development, the quantified objectives for the five year period, greater specificity and accountability of the proposed goals.

All comments received regarding the draft Housing Element were considered and where appropriate, the draft Element was revised. The City's desire to address these comments and to work cooperatively with developers, advocacy groups and other interested persons served to further delay the schedule of adoption of the Housing Element.

In November 2000, a public-noticed hearing was held before the Housing Advisory Commission and Planning Commission to consider the adoption of the Housing Element and compliance with Government Code Section 655886.1 for the 1999-2004 Housing Element cycle. On December 19, 2000, the City Council held a public noticed hearing to consider the recommendation of both the Housing Advisory Commission and Planning Commission to adopt the Element.

Sources of Information

The Regional Housing Needs Statement produced by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) in 1999 provided the majority of the background material for the preparation of the Housing Element. This document includes data from the 1990 Census and SANDAG's 1998 Population and Housing Estimates, among other sources.

TABLE 1: STATE HOUSING ELEMENT REQUIREMENTS CALIFORNIA, 1999

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